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INSIDE

Joining Forces to Fight HIV/AIDS U.S., Global Fund, Ethiopian Government Form New Partnership

Addis Ababa (U.S. Embassy) - On Tuesday, February 7, the U.S. Charge d'Affaires, Ambassador Vicki Huddleston, joined Minister of Health Dr. Tedros Adhanom to sign a Memorandum of Understanding that will collaboratively advance HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment activities in Ethiopia through better harmonization, coordination, and integration of



Ambassador Huddleston shakes hands with Minister of Health Dr. Tedros Adhanom at the signing.

tion, and integration of two major initiatives – the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The parties agreed to work to advance HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment activities in Ethiopia; together, the President's Emergency Plan and the Global Fund are providing funds totaling over \$199 million to combat the epidemic in Ethiopia.

Joining the Ambassador Huddleston and Dr. Tedros at the

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Ambassador Huddleston Congratulates Women MPs

Addis Ababa (U.S. Embassy) – The U.S. Charge d'Affaires, Ambassador Vicki Huddleston, has congratulated participants in a U.S.-funded capacity-building program for women parliamentarians, calling them "vibrant, intelligent and most importantly inquisitive women" who have a vital stake in the country's democratic future. The training program was the second in a series of parliamentary training

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Ambassador Huddleston (left) with Wz. Shitaye Minale, Deputy Speaker of the House, congratulating participants.

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Joining Forces to Fight HIV/AIDS . . .

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signing ceremony, which took place at the Ministry of Health, were Linden Morrison, Portfolio Manager at the Global Fund; William Hammink, Mission Director of the U.S. Agency for International Development in Ethiopia; and Dr. Tadesse Wuhib, Country Director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The new MOU aims to enhance partnership among the parties in the implementation of Ethiopia's National HIV/AIDS Strategy

through a common program of work for planning, management, resource mobilization and allocation, and monitoring and evaluation.

Among the activities made possible by this memorandum is the start of joint planning and procurement of antiretroviral drugs (ARVs). Through grants from the multi-national Global Fund, the Government of Ethiopia will provide first-line drug treatment, while the President's Emergency Plan will provide second-line adult and

all pediatric formulations. Through a transparent process, the two will work closely to ensure that national treatment services operate with an uninterrupted supply of anti-retroviral drugs.

This year the combined efforts of the President's Emergency Plan and the Global Fund, working in cooperation with the Government of Ethiopia, promise to have a substantial impact in the frontline attack against HIV/AIDS. ♦

Ambassador Huddleston Congratulates Women MPs . . .

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activities made possible by the United States, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and implement by Women's Campaign International (WCI), and the first targeting women.

The training was designed to address the specific needs of women members of Parliament, focusing on their potential as leaders and legislators. Topics covered during the training included the legislative process, public speaking, media relations, and team building. The program followed a general orientation program that WCI conducted for all members of the House of Peoples' Representatives in December 2005.

The purpose of the USAID/Women's Campaign International program in Ethiopia is to increase

the capacity of women leaders to influence political decision-making. In programming aimed at candidates ahead of the May 2005 elections, WCI trained 31 women candidates competing for seats on Re-

Media Association to launch a media campaign highlighting the importance of voting for women candidates.

As a result of the May 2005 elections, the percentage of women members of Parliament has increased from 7.7% to 21%, a total of 117 women MPs.



Women MPs at the training.

gional State Councils and 78 women candidates campaigning to represent their constituencies in the Federal House of People's Representatives. WCI also awarded a sub-grant to the Ethiopian Women

Women's Campaign International (WCI) is a U.S. based non-profit organization. It works with women leaders, activists, advocacy groups, and other non-profit partner organizations. Since its founding in 1998, WCI has conducted training pro-

grams in Romania, Venezuela, Uruguay, the Andean Region, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Namibia, Tanzania; a program in Malawi is now underway. ♦

The United States Salutes Workplace Efforts to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis

Addis Ababa (U.S. Embassy) - The United States, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), has paid tribute to the managers and staff of 22 Ethiopian companies for their commitment to promoting workplace-based efforts to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic. These dedicated employees were acknowledged for their leadership in innovative programs that reach thousands of their colleagues and their families with vital information the prevention, care, and treatment of HIV and tuberculosis.

"The numbers of employees and family members who have benefited by the steps these companies have taken are impressive," said Janet Wilgus, the U.S. Embassy's Deputy Chief of Mission, at a recognition event organized by USAID program partner Abt Associates. "With 1.5 million people living with HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia, there is no backing down against HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis awareness."

USAID supports these workplace initiatives through its Private Sector Program, which assists program partners such as Abt Associ-

ates that help large companies respond to both diseases, acting as consultants to company management and creating activities to help them better understand and respond to HIV/AIDS and TB and to

Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

As a result of this program, participating companies are linking peer education with testing for HIV and TB, nutrition counseling, and medical products such as water disinfectants, multivitamins, and insecticide-treated nets to prevent illness. These low cost services reduce absence from work and keep employees who are living with HIV/AIDS healthier, allowing them to continue working to support their families.

Since March 2005, USAID's Private Sector Program has supported over 30,000 employees and family members in 34 workplaces, with plans in place to reach 55 of the largest companies in Ethiopia, as well as to work with private clinics to improve both service quality and accessibility. ♦



U.S. Embassy's Deputy Chief of Mission Janet Wilgus speaking at the event.

become more effective with training, communications, and best practices. Funding for this program, which totals over \$900,000 (about 7.8 million birr) is made possible in part by the President's

Bush Africa Policy Team Scores High with Former USTR Official

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Sub-Saharan Africa is facing wide-ranging political and economic challenges with the help of an "unprecedented" U.S. policy and development team, says former U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) for Africa Rosa Whitaker.

Whitaker, who was named the first USTR for Africa in President Bill Clinton's administration, has high praise for his successor, President George Bush, whose "excellent" choices of advisers and policymakers, she says, are working well to partner with Africans seeking sustainable political and economic development.

In a February 7 interview with the Washington File, the former official, who now runs her own international business consulting firm, the Whitaker Group, said, "I think President Bush has an exceptional Africa team and he has done exceptional work on Africa."

Beginning with a trip he made to Africa in July 2003, Bush has shown an extraordinary concern for the continent and its people, Whitaker said. "This concentration is reflected in his team -- people like Jendayi Frazer [assistant secretary of state for African affairs] and Cindy Courville [national security adviser on Africa].

"Also, it was especially heartening to all of us who care about Africa to have Ambassador [and former USTR Robert] Zoellick and Secretary [of State Condoleezza] Rice involved in African affairs. This is an 'A' team -- one of the best seen in any administration having to do with Africa,"

Whitaker said.

Acknowledging Bush's continued "very strong commitment to Africa," the former official said: "I think that one fundamental component, however, needs some more work, and that's on trade-capacity building. While he has increased financial support to health and overall development, it's trade-



Rosa Whitaker

capacity building that is going to truly result in the kind of sustainable development his administration is trying to achieve in sub-Saharan Africa."

Whitaker explained that she meant "those initiatives like AGOA [African Growth and Opportunity Act] that help build the capacity of Africa's private sector and governments to take advantage of the market opportunities that AGOA affords."

"Don't get me wrong," she added. "Bush is pushing AGOA IV [an expanded version of the current legislation] forward, and he has done more than any other president in terms of building trade capacity: for example, he has a

\$30 million global competitiveness program for Africa. But we would just like to see more money in the budget for efforts like that.

"I believe that Africans, if given the opportunities and support, can, like China, export themselves out of poverty -- and so ultimately not have to depend on aid and debt relief," Whitaker said.

According to U.S. government statistics, the Bush administration provided \$3.2 billion in development aid to Africa in 2004. This was triple the amount provided in 2000 and "the fastest rate of growth in U.S. foreign assistance since the Marshall Plan," for the reconstruction of post-World War II Europe, a State Department fact sheet notes.

Other forms of assistance to the continent include \$635 million in humanitarian aid to Darfur from 2003 to 2005; HIV/AIDS relief amounting to \$780 million 2004; and \$150 million to the African Union peacekeeping mission in Darfur.

For more on U.S. policy in the region, see Africa (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/>).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

U.S. Goals in Sudan Include Peace, Aid Access, Strengthening AU

By Susan Ellis
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – The United States, which assumed the chairmanship of the U.N. Security Council for the month of February, will use its position "to try to strengthen the African Union's work in Darfur to ensure that [it has] the resources necessary to provide for humanitarian access as well as to try to protect civilians and, again, to arrest the deterioration," U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer told the news media February 3 at a State Department briefing.

Frazier also told reporters the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Sudan will benefit Darfur and bring the country's civil war to a close as well.

Recently back from the region, Frazer said the CPA "provides the framework for achieving [a] political solution on Darfur."

"There are many tragedies in Darfur, and ultimately what we need to arrest the deteriorating situation, the security environment there, is a peace agreement, a peace solution," Frazer continued. "We're continuing to work with the AU [African Union] mediator, Dr. Salim Salim, in Abuja, Nigeria, to ... find a solution to the crisis in Darfur through a power-sharing and wealth-sharing agreement that also has some arrangements for security."

Although the Khartoum government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) signed the CPA January 9, 2005, ending more than 20 years of civil war between Sudan's predominantly

Muslim North and the non-Muslim South, ongoing violence and sporadic atrocities continue to threaten and displace the residents of the country's western region of Darfur. AU-mediated peace negotiations are going on in Abuja, with the seventh and latest round of talks, which began on November



U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Jendayi Frazer

28, 2005, having resumed after a holiday break on January 15.

Speaking of the current visit to Washington of Southern Sudan Minister of Roads and Transport Rebecca Garang, Frazer said the multiple tragedies in Darfur have "overshadowed the North-South Peace Agreement and the important work that's still required to implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. And I think that Rebecca Garang's visit here helps us to continue to focus on trying to consolidate the peace

that had ended a 22-year civil war that killed over 2 million people."

The United States continues to have three major objectives in Darfur, she said. "One, and most importantly, trying to get that peace agreement; secondly, trying to ensure humanitarian access; and also trying to continue to push all of the parties to respect their cease-fire and to strengthen the African Union's mission so that it can better secure civilians and provide for that humanitarian access."

She said in Sudan there has been "a fraying of the security environment and violations of the cease-fire on the part of all parties -- the rebels, SLA [Sudan Liberation Army], the JEM [Justice and Equality Movement], as well as the government of Sudan and its militia forces, particularly the Jingaweit."

Regarding the planned transition of the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS) to a blue-hatted U.N. mission, Frazer said the AU has been "highly successful in diminishing the large-scale organized violence in Darfur." She added that the AU Peace and Security Council agreed on January 12, "in principle, to seek a transition from the AMIS force to a U.N. operation within the framework of partnership between the AU, the U.N. and their respective members." It is not a new idea, but one that was envisioned since the beginning of the AMIS operation in August 2004, she added.

"We're also very pleased that

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U.S., Multinational Troops Renovate School in Djibouti

The following article originally appeared February 2 in the U.S. Central Command/Coalition Newsletter. There are no republication restrictions.

(begin byliner)

Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa renovates Djiboutian school, builds walls
By USAF Tech. Sgt. Cindy Dorfner

DJIBOUTIVILLE, DJIBOUTI, February 2, 2006 -- About 1,800 students now enjoy a safer and more secure learning environment after a major renovation of the Al-Hourya School here funded by the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa.

CJTF-HOA is made up of U.S. joint forces, the U.S. Department of State and more than two dozen coalition forces from around the globe. The group conducts operations and training to help host nations establish a secure environment and enable regional stability.

The nearly \$130,000 venture saw a complete overhaul to all four buildings on the school grounds, including repair or replacement of ceilings and roofs, electrical components and plumbing systems. A building with toilets was constructed and the buildings were painted.

In addition to the renovations, a wall surrounding the school grounds was demolished and a concrete security fence rebuilt as



Marguerita Ragsdale, U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Djibouti (second from left), and Col. Nicholas Augustine, future operations officer for CJTF-HOA, perform the traditional ribbon-cutting ceremony during the dedication of the Al-Hourya School and fence Jan. 31.

part of the project. A local contractor completed the work.

According to Pakistan Army Capt. Omer Munj, an engineer assigned to CJTF-HOA, the school

unsafe and there were no toilets."

The new wall offers more security and also keeps wandering animals from roaming around the school grounds, Captain Munj said.

School officials dedicated the school and wall in a ceremony Jan. 31 attended by Marguerita Ragsdale, U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Djibouti, officials from CJTF-HOA, as well as teachers, parents and students.

"It's a great pleasure for me, on behalf of the United States, to dedicate the renovation of this school and this wall," said Col. Nicholas Augustine, future operations officer for Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa.



Students at the Al-Hourya School gather during the dedication ceremony of the school and a security wall Jan. 31.

Colonel Augustine saved the bulk of his message for the school's students -- a group he addressed as the future leaders of Djibouti.

"This is a very important time in your life -- a time you will make new friends and learn new things," he said. "The coalition came here to help renovate your school because we want you to have a nice place to learn."

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Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

and surrounding wall were in desperate need of the repairs.

"The school and wall were in very bad shape," Captain Munj said. "The electrical system was

Bush Seeks \$3 Billion for Millennium Challenge Account in 2007

By Bruce Odessey
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- President Bush has requested \$3 billion in the fiscal year starting October 1 (fiscal year 2007) for the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), his foreign aid program aimed at rewarding countries that rule justly, invest in people and promote economic freedom.

The president had asked for the same level of spending for fiscal year 2006, but Congress approved only \$1.7 billion.

In his fiscal 2007 budget proposal to Congress released February 6, Bush also asked for \$2.9 billion for his Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, up from more than \$1.9 billion approved for the current year.

The budget proposal is the first step in a long, complex legislative process. Before the federal government can spend any money, the House of Representatives and Senate must pass final spending bills and the president must sign them.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation, which operates the MCA, so far has identified 23 eligible countries and approved agreements with eight of them -- Madagascar, Cape Verde, Honduras, Nicaragua, Georgia, Armenia, Vanuatu and Benin -- worth a total \$1.5 billion.

In 2002 when Bush laid out his MCA proposal, he envisioned annual spending would have reached \$5 billion by now, but Congress

has cut his request each year.

New MCC Director John Danilovich has said he wants to speed up the MCA application and payment processes and make larger agreements with fewer countries to achieve the greatest impact. (See Millennium Challenge Account (http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/mca.html).)

Over the past year the United States has spent more than \$8.2 billion to fight the global HIV/AIDS epidemic, providing anti-retroviral treatment for more than 400,000 people in 15 focus countries, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa.

The president's request for fiscal year 2007 seeks \$4 billion for the AIDS fight, including the \$2.9 billion for the Emergency Plan. It also would include about \$300 million for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, following on U.S. contributions of \$2 billion to the Global Fund 2002-2006. (See HIV/AIDS (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/hiv_aids.html).)

In addition to the money for MCA and HIV/AIDS, President Bush has proposed the following foreign spending for fiscal year 2007:

\$6.2 billion in assistance in the global War on Terror;

\$1.1 billion for reconstruction activities in Afghanistan;

\$771 million to support Iraq's transition to self reliance;

\$2.7 billion in development and child survival and health assis-

tance;

\$1.3 billion in disaster, transition and refugee assistance;

\$1.3 billion in food and famine assistance;

\$722 million in counter-narcotics funding for the Andean Counter-drug Initiative, including \$465 million for Colombia; and

\$276 million to address global peacekeeping requirements and establish the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization to coordinate U.S. government civilian response to conditions in failed, failing and post-conflict states.

A fact sheet (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/60436.htm>) on the international affairs budget request is available on the State Department Web site. An MCC press release (http://www.mcc.gov/public_affairs/press_releases/pr_020606_fy07budget.shtml) is available on at the corporation's Web site.

For information on how U.S. foreign assistance is affecting lives, see Partnership for a Better Life (<http://usinfo.state.gov/partnerships/index.html>).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

Bush Pledges Active Foreign Policy To Promote Democracy

By Todd Bullock
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- An active foreign policy that alleviates suffering and helps those most in need serves both the short and long-term interests of the United States, says President Bush.

"One reason to be active in the world is to spread peace," Bush said February 1 in a speech in Nashville, Tennessee, "If the United States were to withdraw, we'd miss an opportunity to make this world a more peaceful place for generations to come."

The president's remarks in Nashville marked the first of several speeches in which he will discuss his agenda for 2006 as laid out in his January 31 State of the Union address to Congress and the American people. In that address Bush called for the United States to engage the international community as a means of building prosperity, security, freedom and hope around the world. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2006/Jan/31-882023.html>).

BUSH OUTLINES U.S. STRATEGY FOR IRAQ

The president said victory in Iraq will be achieved when that nation is a self-sustaining democracy capable of governing and defending itself, as well as an ally in the War on Terror, the president said.

The goal is to help Iraq become "a country which will serve as a powerful example of liberty and freedom in a part of the world that is desperate for liberty and freedom," Bush said.

"The Iraqis have shown incredible courage, and a strong desire to live in [a] democracy," Bush said, citing successful elections in 2005 in which Iraqi voters not only ratified a constitution but chose legislators for the Council of Representatives. (See Iraq's Political Process (http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/iraq/political_process.html)).

"This young democracy has gone from tyranny -- a brutal dictator that killed or had killed thousands of people, to a country which had a transitional government in an election, to a country which wrote a progressive constitution ... and had that constitution ratified, to a country in which 11 million people voted in elections last December," he said.

Regarding security in Iraq, Bush said his administration would continue to focus on training Iraqi security forces.

"There is a great bravery amongst these Iraqi soldiers," he said. "Our job is to convert their desire to protect their new democracy into effective forces, and that's what we're doing."

The president lauded Iraqi security forces' success during the December 2005 elections as there was significantly lower violence than during the October 2005 elections.

Additionally, he noted U.S. commanders were turning over more Iraqi territory to Iraqi security forces to maintain. "As the Iraqis are capable of taking the fight to the enemy, we will reduce our troop levels," Bush said, adding

that U.S. troop withdrawals will depend on recommendations from U.S. military commanders.

"We've defined victory, and now it's up to the commanders on the ground to help us achieve that victory," he said.

For additional information on U.S. policy, see Iraq Update (http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/iraq.html).

IRAN

The international community will remain unified in calling for Iran to abandon its efforts to obtain nuclear weapons, Bush said.

The United States and the other four permanent members of the U. N. Security Council -- Britain, China, France and Russia -- along with Germany and the European Union will ask the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to report Iran to the U.N. Security Council over Iran's nuclear program. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Archive/2006/Jan/31-598440.html>)).

The IAEA board of governors will meet in special session February 2 on what course of action to take. The IAEA already has found Iran in violation of nuclear obligations and issued a warning to the government in Tehran in September 2005. Iran has insisted its nuclear program is intended only to produce electricity.

In a February 1 interview with the Associated Press, Bush said he had spoken to Russian President

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Rumsfeld Says U.S. Must See Iraq Mission Through to Completion

By David Anthony Denny
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The global War on Terror is not a conflict between Islam and the West, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld says, but rather an intra-Muslim clash between moderates and extremists.

"The enemy would like to define this war as a conflict between Islam and the West, but it is not," Rumsfeld told the Senate Armed Services Committee February 7. "The vast majority of Muslims do not share the violent ideology of al-Qaida. ... [They] do not want the extremists to win, and many are opposing them at every opportunity," he said.

Marine General Peter Pace, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the committee, "We are involved in a long war against an enemy that is ruthless, adaptive and patient, and they are trying to destroy the resolve of the American people through gradual attrition. Iraq is certainly ... the center of gravity in this war on terrorism."

Rumsfeld said, "If America has the patience and the will to see this noble and necessary mission to completion -- and we must -- Iraq can emerge as a nation with a representative government, at peace with its neighbors, and one that can become an ally in the global War on Terror."

Explaining the rationale for the fiscal year 2007 defense budget, Rumsfeld said it is impossible to defend the United States at every

moment of every day from every conceivable method and mode of attack.

"The only way to protect the American people, therefore, is to ... focus on developing a range of capabilities, rather than preparing to confront any one threat," said

where the enemy is going next, rather than simply where the enemy was. ... And this means upgrading U.S. intelligence capabilities -- both human and technological -- and more effectively linking technology to operations in real time in the field," he said.



Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld testifies before the Senate Armed Services Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington, February 7, 2006.
REUTERS/Kevin Lamarque

Rumsfeld. "And this approach ... has governed decisions made in developing both the president's budget and the Quadrennial Defense Review," he added. (

Although the Defense Department remains prepared to fight conventional wars, Rumsfeld said, "We've shifted ... to a greater emphasis on fighting unconventional, or irregular, or asymmetric wars against terrorist cells or enemy guerrillas." That is why Special Forces Operations will have doubled since 2001, and will include a Marine Corps component for the first time, he said.

Further, the role and importance of intelligence is being shifted, the secretary said. "In the future, we must be better in ascertaining

Committee Chairman John Warner of Virginia voiced concern about "the increasing level of corruption and criminality in Iraq, and the difficulty that our coalition forces are finding in performing military missions in the face of this very significant corruption and criminality."

In reply, Rumsfeld agreed that corruption is a problem, but said, "I don't know that it's on the increase. What's on the increase is our awareness

of corruption.

"It's true that violence, corruption and criminality continue to pose challenges in Iraq," Rumsfeld said. "There has been, historically, corruption in that country. And it is something that is so corrosive of democracy that I quite agree with you that it's critically important that it be attacked, and that the new leadership in that country be measured against their commitment to attacking corruption."

Ranking minority member Carl Levin of Michigan noted that critics have called the new Iraqi Constitution "a divisive document." He then read a quote of President Bush praising the constitution on December 12, 2005, and

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President Bush Addresses Coretta King Memorial Service

Addressing a memorial service attended by at least 10,000 people, many of whom lined up before 3:00 a.m., and a parade of dignitaries including three of his predecessors and more than one dozen United States senators, President Bush on February 7 offered the nation's sympathy at the passing of Coretta Scott King, "a woman who worked to make our nation whole."

Mrs. King, the widow of the slain Martin Luther King Jr., died January 30 at the age of 78. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/Archive/2006/Jan/31-42754.html>).

Her body lay in honor at the Georgia state Capitol, and at Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church, where Martin Luther King Jr. held the pulpit as co-pastor with his father from 1960 to 1968, and then at the 10,000-seat New Birth Missionary Baptist Church. The Associated Press estimated that more than 160,000 mourners have paid their respects.



Guests listen to speakers at the home going celebration for Coretta Scott King, Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2006 at the New Birth Missionary Church in Atlanta, Ga.,. White House photo by Eric Draper

President Bush told the assemblage that Coretta Scott King's "dignity was a daily rebuke to the pettiness and cruelty of segregation."

Observing that the King family had been subjected to vicious words, threatening calls in the night and a bombing at their house, Bush said that Mrs. King "decided that her children needed more than a safe home – they

needed an America that upheld their equality, and wrote their rights into law."

"Rarely has so much been asked of a pastor's wife," the president continued, "and rarely has so much been taken away."

Despite this loss, "no one could make her bitter. ... And when she spoke, America listened closely, because her voice carried the wisdom and goodness of a life well lived."

Former Presidents Jimmy Carter, George

H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton all were scheduled to speak, along with the four King children, including the Reverend Bernice Albertine King, who was scheduled to deliver the eulogy, and numerous dignitaries.

See also "Americans Celebrate Achievements of Martin Luther King Jr. (<http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/Archive/2006/Jan/11-901573.html>)" ♦

U.S. Goals in Sudan Include Peace, Aid Access, Strengthening AU . . .

(Continued from page 5)

Congo-Brazzaville President Sassou-Nguesso is the new president of the AU, and his country is also now a member of the [U.N.] Security Council. And so we do believe that the AU and the U.N. Security Council, through its president, will be able to work very closely to-

gether to try to secure the environment and bring about a peaceful resolution of the crisis in Darfur.

"We will support the AU's effort. As I said, we'll use our February presidency of the Security Council to achieve and improve security, to improve the humanitarian

situation, and to continue to support the AU's mediation to get a peaceful solution."

A transcript (<http://www.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/2006/60376.htm>) of the briefing is available on the State Department Web site. ♦

U.S. Will Aid Nations Combating Terrorism Within Their Borders

Washington -- Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld says the United States will use all elements of national power to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and to aid friendly nations combating terrorism within their borders.

The terrorists that the United States and a coalition of 85 nations are battling are willing to wait long periods of times between attacks, the secretary told an audience at the Washington National Press Club February 2. While terrorists who have attacked U.S. and allied interests may have been weakened by collective efforts, they still "lurk in [the] shadows," he added, waiting to use violent means to capture media headlines.

Speaking some 52 months after the September 11 attacks against New York and the Pentagon, Rumsfeld said al-Qaida is both "global in scope" and "ruthless in purpose." And, he said, another 18 loosely related terrorist organizations in places such as Israel, Indonesia, Russia, Algeria, Somalia, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan want to support a vision to take over existing governments extending from North Africa to South Asia. As evidence of their plan, Rumsfeld said the terrorists have distributed a map on which national borders have been erased, giving way to what he described as a "global extremist Islamic empire."

What is transpiring today is not a war between the West and the Muslim world as some extremists have incorrectly suggested, the secretary said, but a war primarily within the Muslim world.

The opportunity now exists, he said, to take action before extremist groups grow stronger and "gain even more adherents." It is up to this generation to listen, learn and act upon this opportunity, Rumsfeld said, "or be prepared to pay severe penalties" in the future.

The secretary quoted Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf as saying terrorism must be fought by finding ways to prevent extremists from turning into terrorists "by showing them a different way of life."

Achieving that means working with partner countries around the world, the secretary said, and by attracting those who would otherwise be caught up in the vision offered by radical Muslim schools. Rumsfeld said ways must be found to diminish the attraction of a militant ideology that promotes beheadings and suicide bombings, and to offer those individuals who would look elsewhere the opportunity to acquire useful productive skills.

Asked when he thought the long war against terrorism might end, Rumsfeld said the "prolonged and complex struggle" will end gradually after a sustained effort as more and more countries prove successful in counterterrorism efforts.

The secretary also answered questions about Hamas, Kuwait and North Korea.

The secretary said the newly elected Hamas government in the Palestinian Territories must decide how it will use its elected power: in a responsible manner, or, to promote the goals of a terrorist or-

ganization. Hamas has a free choice, Rumsfeld said, and the decision it takes will determine the level of cooperation it receives on financial assistance and other matters. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/Archive/2006/Jan/27-285951.html>).)

Rumsfeld said he did not expect the U.S.-Kuwaiti relationship to change in any way with the appointment of a new emir. He said he expects similar continuity of leadership from Shaykh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al Sabah. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=January&x=20060130162116bcrek-law0.7969019&t=mena/mena-latest.html>).)

On North Korea's nuclear ambitions, the secretary said Russia, Japan, China, South Korea and the United States are working diligently on the diplomatic front to persuade North Korea's leaders to follow the example of Libya and give up nuclear weapons. It is entirely possible, he said, that North Korea might decide to follow Libya's constructive path. (See U. S. Policy Toward North Korea (http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/east_asia_pacific/north_korea.html).)

For additional information, see Response to Terrorism (http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/terrorism.html).

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U.S. Attorney General Gonzales Says Secret Wiretapping Lawful

By Carol Walker
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The U.S. program that conducts terrorist surveillance is "lawful in all respects," Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales told the Senate Judiciary Committee on February 6, his first day of testimony defending the National Security Administration's program.

Republican Senator Arlen Specter from Pennsylvania, committee chair, said the purpose of the hearings was to examine how the president's surveillance program fits with the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, which was passed in 1978 and prohibits electronic surveillance without an order from a secret court.

Specter said the program also should be examined in the context of the general authority granted to President Bush by Congress after September 11, 2001, and updated five times since then to give the president broad and flexible authority for the use of force against terrorists.

To fight the War on Terror, the Bush administration has used legal means to search out terrorists abroad and shut down their cells in the United States, Gonzales said.

"To succeed, we must deploy not just soldiers and sailors, airmen and marines, we must also depend on intelligence analysts, surveillance experts, and the nimble use of our technological strengths," he added.

According to Gonzales, the terrorist surveillance program was in-

stituted in the United States after the September 11, 2001, attacks by al-Qaida, and it has detected and prevented terror plots in the United States and abroad.



U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales speaks to members of the Senate Judiciary Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington, February 6, 2006.
REUTERS/Kevin Lamarque

Democratic and Republican leaders of the House and the Senate Intelligence Committees have "known about this program for years," Gonzales said. "The bipartisan leadership of both the House and Senate has also been informed. During the course of these briefings, no members of Congress asked that the program be discontinued."

In response to senators' questions about the constitutionality and legality of the program's warrantless surveillance, Gonzales said

President Bush approved the program, which Gonzales described as an early warning system for the 21st century, and imposed safeguards to protect the privacy and civil liberties of Americans.

For example, only phone calls and e-mails between a foreign country and the United States are authorized for interception under the terrorist surveillance program, and the surveillance is triggered only when a career professional at the National Security Administration has reasonable grounds to believe that one of the parties to a communication is a member or agent of al-Qaida or an affiliated terrorist organization.

"If you're talking with al-Qaida," Gonzales quoted President Bush, "we want to know what you're saying."

"The program is consistent with our Constitution," Gonzales added. "Under Article II, the president has the duty and authority to protect America from attack."

Additional information (<http://judiciary.senate.gov/hearing.cfm?id=1727>) about the hearing is available on the committee's Web site.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

Negroponte Says Terrorism Tops U.S. List of Threats

By David Anthony Denny
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The director of U.S. national intelligence calls terrorism "the pre-eminent threat to our citizens, to our homeland and to our interests abroad."

Ambassador John Negroponte told a Senate Select Intelligence Committee hearing February 2 that "the war on terror is our first priority and driving concern as we press ahead with a major transformation of the intelligence community." Negroponte was the main administration witness testifying about worldwide threats faced by the United States. Also present at the hearing were: Central Intelligence Agency Director Porter Goss; Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Robert Mueller; General Michael Hayden, Negroponte's principal deputy; Defense Intelligence Agency Director Lieutenant General Michael Maples; Department Of Homeland Security Chief Intelligence Officer Charles Allen; and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State For Intelligence and Research Carol Rodley.

In an opening statement to the committee, Negroponte presented a general survey of threats to the United States as analyzed and evaluated by the U.S. Intelligence community. He commented on: global jihadists and the efforts to defeat them; the struggle in Iraq and Afghanistan against "insurgency, terror, and extremism"; Iran and North Korea in the context of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; political instability in various regions; and globalization, emerging powers and

transnational challenges such as the geopolitics of energy, narco-trafficking and possible pandemics.

From his perspective as director of U.S. national intelligence, Negroponte said "the most dramatic



U.S. Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte (L) answers a question at a Senate Select Intelligence Committee hearing on world wide threats to the United States, on Capitol Hill in Washington, February 2, 2006.
REUTERS/Jason Reed

change of all is the exponential increase in the number of targets we must identify, track and analyze." Analysts must pay attention not only to unfriendly national governments, he said, but also to "terrorist groups, proliferation networks, alienated communities, charismatic individuals, narcotrafickers and microscopic influenza."

These are issues that confront not only the United States, Negroponte continued, but also "responsible leaders everywhere. That is the true nature of

the 21st century: accelerating change affecting and challenging us all."

At the top of the intelligence community's list of threats is al-Qaida, Negroponte said. Though much of its 2001 leadership has been eliminated and its cadres depleted, he said, "the organization's core elements still plot and make preparations for terrorist strikes against the homeland and other targets, from bases in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border area." He added that al-Qaida has benefited from its merger with Abu Musaab al-Zarqawi's network in Iraq. That has, he said, "broadened al-Qaida's appeal within the jihadist community and potentially put new resources at its disposal."

Assessing the situation in Iraq, Negroponte said if Iraqis create a stable political and security situation, "the jihadists will be perceived to have failed and fewer jihadists will leave Iraq determined to carry on the fight elsewhere." If not, the jihadists "could secure an operational base in Iraq and inspire sympathizers elsewhere to move beyond rhetoric to attempt attacks against neighboring Middle Eastern nations, against Europe, and even the United States." (See Iraq Update (http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/iraq.html).)

In the question-and-answer period that followed Negroponte's presentation, Committee Chairman Pat Roberts asked him to assess the intelligence community's current capabilities to collect and analyze information about terrorism

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Bush Pledges Active Foreign Policy To Promote Democracy . . .

(Continued from page 8)

Vladimir Putin about Iran and that the two countries share the same goal. Speaking to reporters en route to Nashville, White House press secretary Scott McClellan said Bush voiced his support for a Russian plan that would limit Tehran's access to nuclear material and waste that could be used to make a weapon, but still provide Iran with material for peaceful nuclear energy uses. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2006/Jan/26-475860.html>).)

In his Nashville speech, Bush also echoed remarks from his State of the Union address that the United

States seeks greater friendship with a free and democratic Iran.

"I believe that everybody desires to be free, and I just wanted to assure them [the Iranian people] that some day that they'll be able to have a choice in their government, and the United States looks forward to a friendship with a free and democratic Iran," Bush said of his message to the Iranian people.

In his State of the Union address, Bush said Iran is a nation "held hostage by a small clerical elite that is isolating and repressing its people" and "defying the world with its nuclear ambitions."

A transcript (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/02/20060201-5.html>) of Bush's Nashville speech is available on the White House Web site.

For additional information, see Arms Control and Non-Proliferation (http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/arms_control.html).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

Negroponte Says Terrorism Tops U.S. List of Threats . . .

(Continued from page 13)

and proliferation regarding Iran, North Korea and China.

"[W]e are working very, very hard on this question of penetrating the hard targets, and I'm satisfied that we're making progress," Negroponte replied.

Committee ranking minority member John D. Rockefeller IV asked Negroponte to corroborate statements the president and vice president had made about the legality of wiretaps without court orders and the much-publicized National Security Agency (NSA) program to intercept communications between persons in the United States and known or suspected al-Qaida members or affiliates outside the country.

Negroponte replied that the NSA program has been "effective and important ... in dealing with the terrorist threat," and then asked his deputy, Hayden, to elaborate.

Hayden said the intelligence community had "learned information from this program that would not otherwise have been available," and that it has "helped detect and prevent terrorist attacks in the United States and abroad."

After the open hearing, the witnesses continued to meet with the committee in closed session.

For additional information, see Response to Terrorism (http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/terrorism.html). ♦

Rumsfeld Says U.S. Must See Iraq Mission Through to Completion . . .

(Continued from page 9)

added, "The president's effusive praise is the wrong message because it lessens the likelihood that the compromises necessary to change the constitution will be made."

In reply, Rumsfeld said that the Iraqi Constitution is "not perfect ... nor was ours."

"Our Constitution still permitted slavery, and women couldn't vote," Rumsfeld noted. "So it strikes me that they have some work to do, just as we had work to do, and I'm encouraged that they'll accomplish that work." ♦

Treasury Official Urges More Active IMF Role on Currency Issues

By Andrzej Zwaniecki
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) must aggressively oversee national exchange rate policies rather than shy away from this role, U.S. Treasury Under Secretary Tim Adams says.

An orderly resolution of global current account imbalances requires an "IMF capable of demonstrating strong leadership on multi-lateral exchange rate surveillance," Adams said February 2 at the American Enterprise Institute, a policy research institute in Washington.

In September 2005 Adams criticized IMF management for relegating issues related to currency exchange regimes and policies to the margins of the fund's country-specific reviews and noted that special consultations regarding such policies were held only twice in IMF history. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/Archive/2005/Sep/16-200238.html>).)

Some private economists have specifically criticized the IMF for not doing enough to persuade China and other emerging markets in Asia to move toward flexible currency exchange regimes.

The policy in China and some other Asian countries of tying the national currency to the U.S. dollar at a set rate has consistently depressed the value of their respective currencies. Combined with the low savings rate in the United States, undervalued Asian currencies have led to huge global current account imbalances -- surpluses in Asia and a deficit in the

United States.

IMF Managing Director Rodrigo de Rato has rejected such criticism. He said the IMF needs to be sensitive to concerns of sovereign countries and that "quiet diplomacy" is more effective than aggressive moves.

But Adams proposed enhancing the exchange rate surveillance

Adams said the IMF should publish a regular report dedicated to global exchange rate developments, a suggestion supported by some private economists including former IMF officials.

In addition, Adams said, IMF management and stakeholders need to remove stigma from the special consultation mechanism



mechanism by clarifying its principles, making analysis and assessment of exchange rate policies an integral part of the IMF's regular country-specific reviews and destigmatizing the special consultation mechanism. He also called for better analysis of exchange rate trends and publishing relevant data and assessments regularly.

He said that country-specific reviews should bring back into focus a "thorough" assessment of exchange rate issues that would place more emphasis on the consistency of a country's exchange rate policy with other domestic policies and multilateral principles.

that allows the fund to consult with countries whose exchange rate policies might not follow IMF principles.

He said that because this mechanism has been applied so rarely "its use today would be perceived as a huge stigma for the country and might have market ramifications." Regular consultations would avoid such unintended consequences, Adams said.

He said U.S. concerns about China's exchange rate policy were too long perceived as a bilateral issue. In fact, he said, this policy

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United States Recognizes World Wetlands Day

U.S. embassies are joining local communities in many world regions in observing World Wetlands Day February 2.

The annual event marks the anniversary of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, an international treaty signed in 1971 in Ramsar, Iran, which is devoted to stopping the worldwide loss of wetlands and conservation of those remaining. The 150 party nations together have provided protections for more than 1.2 million square kilometers of wetlands, designating them "wetlands of international importance."

The United States is a party to the treaty, and President Bush announced domestic initiatives to advance the international goals in 2004 when he set new goals to create, improve and protect at least 12,000 square kilometers of wetlands over the next five years.

A description of Wetlands Day activities are described in a media note from the U.S. State Department as follows:

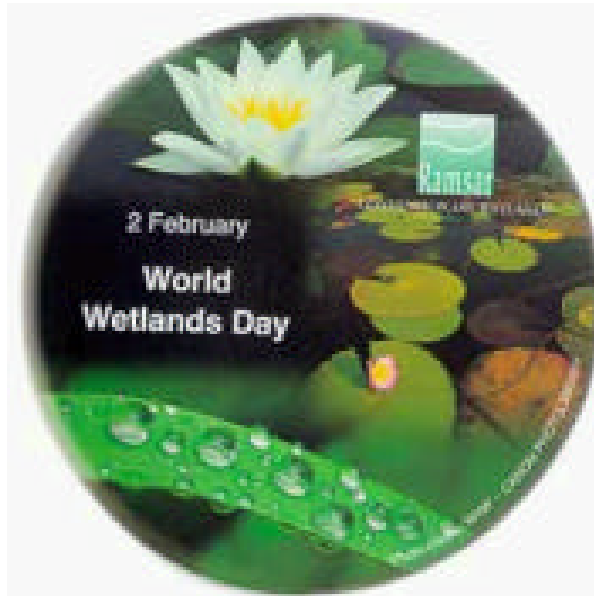
(begin text)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman
February 2, 2006

Media Note

World Wetlands Day

On February 2, United States Embassies from South America to the Middle East will join their local communities to commemorate World Wetlands Day, an annual



celebration of the vital importance of wetlands to the world's ecological health and of efforts to conserve these invaluable habitats. The day marks the anniversary of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, signed February 2, 1971 in Ramsar, Iran.

This year's theme, "In the face of poverty ... wetlands are lifelines," emphasizes the essential role of well-managed wetlands in poverty alleviation. Wetlands provide a crucial source of food, water, and natural products. In rural areas, wetlands are a primary source of income, and can be vital when other income sources fail. They also play an important role as a source of recreation, transportation, and cultural heritage.

Wetlands play a vital role in storm and flood protection and water filtration. They provide groundwater replenishment, benefiting inhabitants of entire watersheds. In addition, they provide a rich feeding ground for migratory birds, fish, and other animals and boost local economies through op-

portunities for the harvesting of aquatic resources and ecotourism.

Recognizing the importance of wetlands, the U.S. in 1987 joined the Ramsar Convention, an international treaty that aims to halt the worldwide loss of wetlands and to conserve those that remain. The treaty's 150 Contracting Parties have designated more than 1500 wetlands sites totaling more than 300 million acres for inclusion in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance. On Earth Day

2004, President Bush announced an aggressive new national initiative to move beyond a policy of "no net loss" of wetlands to an overall increase of wetlands in America. The President's goal is to create, improve, and protect at least three million wetland acres over the next five years in order to increase overall wetland acreage and quality.

The U.S. currently has 22 Ramsar sites covering nearly 3.2 million acres. This includes three sites designated in 2005, two in California and one in Hawaii.

For further information, visit the State Department's Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science Web site at <http://www.state.gov/g/oes> and the Ramsar Web site at <http://ramsar.org/>.

(end text)

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United States Combating HIV/AIDS at Home and Abroad

The Bush administration's ongoing commitment to fighting HIV/AIDS domestically and internationally was summarized in a White House fact sheet issued February 1.

At home, the Bush administration is advocating reform and renewed funding for the major law that provides for the care and treatment of the more than 1 million Americans living with HIV/AIDS. Abroad, the centerpiece of U.S. efforts is the nation's ongoing commitment to the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), a five-year, \$15 billion initiative to expand treatment, care, counseling and disease prevention in 15 especially hard-hit nations, according to the fact sheet.

For information on how U.S. foreign assistance is impacting lives, see Partnership for a Better Life (<http://usinfo.state.gov/partnerships/index.html>).

The text of the fact sheet follows:

(begin fact sheet)

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
February 1, 2006

Continuing the Fight Against HIV/AIDS In America

In his State of the Union Address, President Bush Highlighted The Administration's Ongoing Commitment To Preventing, Treating, And Defeating HIV/AIDS In The United States. More than one million Americans live with HIV, and half of all AIDS cases occur



among African Americans. The President has made fighting the domestic spread of HIV/AIDS a top priority, and he will continue to work with Congress to support effective prevention and compassionate care and treatment.

-- Congress Must Reform And Reauthorize The Ryan White CARE Act. In his State of the Union Address, the President again called on Congress to reform and reauthorize this important legislation. The Ryan White CARE Act is a comprehensive approach to providing medical care, antiretroviral treatments, and counseling and testing for those in greatest need

of HIV/AIDS assistance.

-- Congress Must Help States Address Existing Gaps. The President also called on Congress to provide new funding to help states end the waiting lists for AIDS medicines in America.

-- Americans Must Work Together To Increase Prevention Efforts, Improve The Lives Of Those Living With HIV/AIDS, And Stop The Spread Of The Disease. The President called for a nationwide effort, working closely with African-American churches and faith-based groups, to deliver rapid HIV tests to millions, end the stigma of AIDS, and come closer to the day when there are no new infections in America.

Taking Action Against HIV/AIDS At Home

Today, More Than One Million Americans Are Living With HIV/AIDS. An estimated 250,000 people do not realize that they carry the virus. Roughly 40,000 new transmissions occur every year in the United States, about half of them resulting from individuals unaware they are infecting others. The number of AIDS cases is especially high in African-American, Hispanic, and gay communities, as well as among intravenous drug users and prisoners.

The Administration Is Taking Action To Turn The Tide Against HIV/AIDS In The United States And Provide More Help To People Who Need It Most. President Bush is

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United States Combating HIV/AIDS at Home and Abroad . . .

(Continued from page 17)

committed to combating HIV/AIDS and his Administration has taken major strides to address the needs of patients and prevent the spread of this terrible disease.

-- Providing Care And Treatment To Americans In Need. To improve and extend the lives of Americans living with HIV/AIDS, the Administration has devoted more than \$74 billion to treatment and care since 2001, increasing annual treatment funding by 45 percent.

-- Supporting Research. To develop new methods of treatment and prevention, and to work toward a cure, the Administration has devoted more than \$15 billion to HIV/AIDS research since 2001, increasing annual research funding by 20 percent.

-- Reducing Mother-to-Child Transmission. Thanks to a concerted public health effort, mother-to-child transmissions of HIV has been nearly wiped out in America.

With The Help Of Medicine, And Their Own Courage, More Americans Are Managing With HIV/AIDS - A Condition That Was Once Uniformly Fatal. The realities of living with HIV/AIDS have changed for the better over the years, from a time when an HIV diagnosis was perceived as a death sentence, to the present day when HIV-positive Americans can live for many years with the help of medications and proper care.

A Plan To Meet Key Domestic HIV/AIDS Challenges

The President Outlined His Plan

To Overcome Domestic HIV/AIDS Challenges Through Compassion, Commitment, And Decisive Action. We now confront three key domestic HIV/AIDS challenges: getting prescription drugs to those who need them, testing those who do not yet know their status, and raising the awareness of those who do not know they should be tested. President Bush has proposed a new domestic HIV/AIDS initiative to address these remaining difficulties head-on and to bring closer the day when there are no new infections in America.

-- Getting Prescription Drugs To Those Who Need Them Through The Ryan White CARE Act. The President has called on Congress to reauthorize the Act in accordance with three key principles that would strengthen the program and better enable it to serve those in need: focus Federal resources on life-extending care; provide greater flexibility to better target resources to address the greatest needs; and encourage the participation of all providers, including faith-based and community organizations, that can show results.

-- Fund For Emergent HIV Treatment Needs. The President has proposed to make \$70 million available to states in need to bridge the existing gaps in coverage for Americans waiting for life-saving medications. These funds would help the states end current waiting lists and help support care for additional patients.

-- Testing Those Who Do Not Know Their Status. The President has proposed to direct a total of more than \$90 million to the purchase and distribution of rapid HIV

test kits, facilitating the testing of more than 3 million additional Americans. Test kits would be distributed in areas of the country with the highest rates of newly discovered HIV cases and the highest suspected rates of undetected cases.

-- Testing Of Prisoners. Rates of new HIV cases are especially high in the nation's prisons and jails. The President proposes to direct approximately \$20 million to directly facilitate the testing of more than 600,000 prisoners, and to offer assistance to states and localities in developing standards for routine testing of many more.

-- Testing Of Intravenous Drug Users. Estimated undiscovered cases are particularly high among intravenous drug users. The President proposes to direct approximately \$20 million to distribute rapid test kits to drug treatment and healthcare professionals who most often come into contact with intravenous drug users. This will directly facilitate the testing of more than 500,000 drug users and help increase awareness to bring about the testing of many more.

-- Utilizing Faith-Based Groups In High-Risk Communities. The President proposes to direct \$25 million in grants to significantly strengthen outreach by local community and faith-based organizations in hardest hit areas. These grants would help raise awareness, increase early detection, combat stigma, and facilitate access to treatment, especially for African-American, Hispanic, Native American, and other minority community groups whose need is often great-

(Continued on page 21)

Bush Seeks \$2.3 Billion for Flu Protection Programs in 2007

By Kathryn McConnell
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- President Bush has requested \$2.3 billion in the fiscal year starting October 1 (fiscal year 2007) for protecting against a potential influenza pandemic.

The president's fiscal 2007 request for influenza preparedness programs administered by the departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Agriculture was released February 6 in the annual budget request to Congress.

The request would build on the \$3.8 billion for pandemic flu preparedness approved by Congress for spending in fiscal year 2006. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Jan/10-726460.html>).)

The budget proposal is the first step in a long, complex legislative process. Before the federal government can spend any money, the House of Representatives and Senate must pass final spending bills and the president must sign them.

Of the fiscal 2007 request, \$188 million would go the health department's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for improving disease surveillance efforts, both in the United States and in other countries.

The importance of the U.S. and international commitment to boost-

ing influenza control programs in lesser-developed nations became more evident the same day the Bush administration's budget was unveiled.

The World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed February 6 the confirmation by Indonesian health authorities of another human death from avian influenza. One of

new vaccines.

It also would fund HHS international activities related to the deployment of rapid disease detection tests for -- and developing and implementing communications about -- a pandemic.

The budget would allocate \$350 million to help local health departments in the United States fund prevention programs, according to news reports.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) would receive \$322 million for improvements in programs for detecting, responding to and recovering from incidences of dis-

eases, pests and poisons introduced into the U.S. food supply accidentally, intentionally or by an act of terrorism.

This would include \$82 million to pay for avian influenza preparation and prevention efforts conducted in cooperation with state authorities, which have jurisdiction over local wildlife and agriculture matters. This appropriation would allow better surveillance of wild birds, thought to be carriers of avian influenza, and live bird markets. The administration's budget proposals also would support programs to prevent wild bird trafficking and stockpile flu vaccines to protect poultry from disease.



seven countries to detect human cases of the dangerous H5N1 virus, Indonesia has identified an additional four human cases of bird flu, with two ending in death. According to the WHO, the newly confirmed human cases of the H5N1 virus bring the total in Indonesia to 23, of which 16 cases were fatal.

BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR VACCINE TRIALS, BIRD FLU PREVENTION

The president's request for fiscal year 2007 seeks \$35 million for the National Institutes of Health to conduct clinical trials of influenza vaccines and \$50 million the Food and Drug Administration to improve the agencies' reviews of

(Continued on page 21)

Corruption Taints Health Care, Costs Lives, Study Finds

The global health care industry is fraught with corruption, leading to human suffering and worsening diseases, according to a report issued February 1.

Transparency International (TI), a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization with a reputation as a corruption watchdog, issued its Global Corruption Report 2006 with a spotlight on health care.

Corruption is depriving people of needed medical care and promoting the development of drug-resistant disease, creating an ever-spiraling cycle of worsening health conditions, according to the report.

The publication, released from TI's Berlin headquarters, draws a straight line between corruption and poor health care in some countries.

Increases in bribery of Filipino medical personnel is linked to a 20 percent decrease in child immunization, according to a press release announcing the findings.

TI attributed declines in Cambodian health care indicators to embezzlement of funds that should have gone to public health.

Corruption also has distorted pharmaceutical markets and promoted a black market in counterfeit drugs, circumstances that have a direct impact on people hoping for cures and relief from those medicines.

"People have a right to expect that the drugs they depend on are real," said TI chief executive David Nussbaum.

"They have a right to think that doctors place a patient's interests above profits," he added. "And most of all, they have a right to believe that the health care industry is there to cure, not to kill."

Global efforts to scale up treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS also are undermined by corruption, TI reported, citing a case in Kenya in which a few high-level civil servants siphoned public funds from the National AIDS Council.

Transparency must be the first step in attacking corruption, the report recommended, suggesting that governments should grant easy access to information on health projects and budgets.

The report also recommended the adoption and enforcement of codes of conduct for health workers and companies and conflict-of-interest rules in drug regulation and procurement.

Rigorous prosecution also should be pursued by governments to send a message that corruption cannot be tolerated, according to the report.

The full text of Global Corruption Report 2006 (http://www.transparency.org/publications/gcr/download_gcr) is available on TI's Web site.

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Treasury Official Urges More Active IMF Role on Currency Issues . . .

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and those of other countries including the United States are multilateral issues because of their global consequences.

Therefore, he said, the ideas he presented go "beyond immediate U.S. policy concerns." They reflect a prevailing belief that a strong IMF role on exchange rate issues is central to the stability and health of the international economy, he said. He said this be-

liefs enjoys support of the Group of Seven (G7) most industrialized countries and many other nations.

The G7 comprises Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.

For additional information, see U.S.-China Trade and Economic Ties (http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/east_asia_pacific/china/us_china_trade_relations.html).

The full text (<http://www.treas.gov/press/releases/js4002.htm>) of Adams' remarks is available on the Treasury Department Web site.

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Bush Seeks \$2.3 Billion for Flu Protection . . .

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The highly pathogenic strain of avian influenza called H5N1 has been found across Asia and in parts of Europe, causing the deaths by disease or culling of approximately 200 million birds. The virus also has infected humans, and the cross-species infection has provoked warnings that pandemic influenza might sweep the world if the virus becomes contagious among humans.

In the more than two years since the disease first appeared in humans, 165 human cases have been confirmed as H5N1 infection by international laboratories collaborating in a global network. The WHO reports that 88 of those human cases have ended in death.

A summary of the HHS budget (<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/06feb20061000/>

www.gpoaccess.gov/usbudget/fy07/pdf/budget/hhs.pdf) (PDF, 26 pages) is available on the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) Web site. A summary of the USDA budget (<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/06feb20061000/www.gpoaccess.gov/usbudget/fy07/pdf/budget/agriculture.pdf>) (PDF, 14 pages) also is available on the GPO site.

For additional information on avian influenza and efforts to combat it, see Bird Flu (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/bird_flu.html).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

United States Combating HIV/AIDS at Home and Abroad . . .

(Continued from page 18)
est.

Taking Action Against HIV/AIDS Abroad

The United States Is Committed To Supporting Our Global Partners And To The Historic Challenge Of Turning The Tide Against A Pandemic. Efforts to defeat HIV/AIDS at home complement the President's ambitious commitment to combat the disease in some of the world's most afflicted nations. Nations around the world are fighting for the lives of their citizens - and America is now their strongest partner in that fight.

-- The President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

Launched in 2003, PEPFAR is the largest international health initiative dedicated to a single disease in history. This effort is designed to support and strengthen the AIDS-fighting strategies of many nations, including 15 heavily afflicted countries in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. The President has committed \$15 billion over five years to support treatment for 2 million people, prevention for 7 million, and care for 10 million. After two years, more than 400,000 sub-Saharan Africans are already receiving the treatment they need.

--The New Partners Initiative. Launched by the President on World AIDS Day in 2005, the New Partners Initiative will establish a competitive grants process for

new partners, including faith-based and community organizations, with the desire and ability to help implement PEPFAR, but who have little or no experience in working with the United States government. By identifying and supporting the organizations that provide much of the health care in the developing world, the new Partners Initiative will help ensure that PEPFAR resources reach more people more effectively.

(end fact sheet)

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